

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for providing prepaid data service to a subscriber terminal in a communications network coupled by a gateway to a data network, the method comprising:

making a determination of whether a balance of ~~the~~ a prepaid account of a corresponding subscriber for the data service meets a threshold;

if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account does not meet the threshold, then passing traffic to a requested destination in the data network;

if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold, then redirecting the traffic to a self-service portal; and

adding value to the balance of the prepaid account at the self-service portal using the subscriber terminal.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein making the determination of whether the balance of the prepaid account meets a threshold comprises comparing the balance of the prepaid account to the threshold.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting a level of prepaid data access to a data network.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending an alert to the subscriber terminal, the alert providing a notification of prepaid data access available to the subscriber terminal.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
establishing a data communication session with a subscriber terminal; and
directing the traffic from the subscriber terminal to the self-service portal in response to establishing the communication session.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
establishing a data communication session with a subscriber terminal over
an air interface,

whereby the traffic is received from the subscriber terminal.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein a counter represents the
balance of the prepaid account, the method further comprising adjusting the counter as
the traffic passes to the requested destination.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
subscribing to a billing server to determine the balance of the prepaid
account; and

receiving an indication of the balance of the prepaid account from the
billing server.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein the indication is whether the
balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising
~~periodically~~ polling the billing server for the indication of the balance of the prepaid
account.

11. (currently amended) A method of providing prepaid data service to a
subscriber terminal in a communications network coupled by a gateway to a data
network, the method comprising:

establishing a communication session with ~~a~~ the subscriber tenninal;

making a determination of whether the balance of ~~the~~ a prepaid account of a
corresponding subscriber for the data service meets a threshold;

if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account does not meet
the threshold, then passing traffic from the subscriber terminal to a requested

destination in the data network;

if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold, then redirecting the traffic from the subscriber terminal to a self-service portal; and

providing an account number to the self service portal using the subscriber terminal to add value to the balance of the prepaid account.

12. (currently amended) A method for providing first and second prepaid data services to a subscriber terminal in a communications network coupled by a gateway to a data network, the method comprising:

making a first determination of whether a balance of a prepaid account of a corresponding subscriber for the first and second data services meets a first threshold determined in response to the first data service;

if the first determination is that the balance of the prepaid account does not meet the first threshold, then passing traffic to a first requested destination in the data network corresponding to the first data service;

making a second determination of whether the balance of ~~a~~ the prepaid account ~~meets~~ does not meet a second threshold, ~~the second determination being made determined~~ in response to ~~(i) the subscriber terminal being dropped from an access gateway; and (ii) the subscriber terminal reestablishing a communication session with the access gateway~~ the second data service; and

if the second determination is that the balance of the prepaid account ~~meets~~ does not meet the second threshold, then redirecting the traffic to a self-service portal.

13. (currently amended) A system for providing prepaid data service to a subscriber of a communications network, comprising:

a subscriber terminal coupled to the communications network;

a data network;

a data gateway coupling the communications network to the data network;

a web server coupled to the data gateway;

wherein the data gateway comprises a processor, a memory, and computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for:

passing traffic from the subscriber terminal to a requested destination in the data network if a balance of ~~the~~ a prepaid account of the subscriber for the data service does not meet a threshold; and

redirecting the traffic to the web server if the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold; and

wherein the web server comprises a processor, a memory, and computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for:

adding value to the balance of the prepaid account in response to the balance of the prepaid account meeting the threshold.

14. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein a determination of whether the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold comprises comparing the prepaid account to the threshold.

15. (currently amended) The system of claim 13, further comprising a policy decision point, the policy decision point having ~~comprises~~ a processor, a memory, and computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for comparing the balance of the prepaid account to the threshold to determine whether the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold.

16. (currently amended) The system of claim 13, ~~wherein~~ further comprising a self-service portal ~~resides~~ residing on the web server.

17. (currently amended) The system of claim 13, ~~wherein~~ further comprising a self-service portal ~~resides~~ residing on the web server, wherein the self-service portal ~~further~~ comprises computer instructions for selecting a level of prepaid data service.

18. (currently amended) The system of claim 13, wherein the data gateway ~~further~~ comprises computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for directing the traffic from the subscriber terminal to the web server in response to a communication session being established with the subscriber terminal.

19. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the data gateway comprises an entity selected from the group consisting of a PDSN, an MSC, an IWF, a WAP server, and a switch.

20. (original) The system of claim 15, wherein the policy decision point comprises an entity selected from the group consisting of a service agent, a service control point, and a network capabilities gateway.

21. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the data gateway further comprises computer instructions stored in memory and executable by the processor for sending an alert to the subscriber terminal, the alert providing a notification of prepaid access available to the subscriber terminal.

22. (original) The system of claim 21, wherein the alert is selected from the group consisting of a text message and a voice message.

23. (currently amended) The system of claim 13, wherein (i) the subscriber terminal transmits the traffic over an air interface to an access ~~entity~~ gateway, and (ii) the access gateway is coupled to the data gateway by a the communication network.

24. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the subscriber terminal is a wireless terminal.

25. (canceled)

26. (original) The system of claim 13, further comprising:
a billing server; and
the data gateway further comprising computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for:

subscribing to the billing server to determine the balance of the prepaid account; and
receiving an indication of the balance of the prepaid account from the billing server.

27. (original) The system of claim 26 wherein the indication is whether the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold.

28. (currently amended) The system of claim 26 wherein the data gateway further comprises computer instructions for ~~periodically~~ polling the subscriber terminal for the indication of the balance of the prepaid account.

29. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein a counter representing the balance of the prepaid account is adjusted as traffic passes to the requested destination.

30. (currently amended) A system for providing prepaid data service to a subscriber of a communications network, comprising:

means for making a determination of whether the balance of ~~the~~ a prepaid account of a corresponding subscriber for the data service meets a threshold;

means for passing traffic to a requested destination in a data network separate from the communications network if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account does not meet the threshold; and

means for redirecting the traffic to a self-service portal if the determination is that the balance of the prepaid account meets the threshold.

31. (currently amended) A system for providing first and second prepaid

data services to a subscriber of a communications network, comprising:

a subscriber terminal coupled to the communications network;

a data network;

a data gateway coupling the communications network to the data network;

wherein the data gateway comprises a processor, memory, and computer instructions stored in the memory and executable by the processor for:

passing traffic to a first requested destination corresponding to the first data service in the data network if a balance of a prepaid account of a corresponding subscriber does not meet a first threshold; ~~and~~

passing traffic to a second requested destination corresponding to the second data service in the data network if a balance of the prepaid account does not meet a second threshold;

monitoring use of the first and second data services until a predetermined credit expires;

notifying both the first and second data services that the predetermined credit expires; and

~~in response to (i) the subscriber terminal being dropped from an access gateway; and (ii) the subscriber terminal reestablishing a communication session with the subscriber terminal~~, redirecting the traffic to a self-service portal ~~if the balance of the prepaid account meets the second threshold~~ when the predetermined credit expires.

32. (original) The system of claim 31, wherein the data gateway is a WAP server.